

The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

"We are all called to be faithful and wise stewards, ever waiting for the coming of our Lord." LUKE 12:40-46

Church Persecuted in the Republic of Georgia

The Holy Orthodox Church in North America (HOCNA) was formed in 1988 by a group of pious Orthodox Christian clergy and laity who wished to preserve and live by the dogmas, liturgical practices, and traditions of the Orthodox Church, free from distortion and innovations. Our local diocese, The Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston — of which Metropolitan Ephraim has been the head since his consecration as bishop in 1988 — was officially incorporated in 1999 as a subdivision of our Holy Orthodox Church in North America.

In 1997, a group of like-minded Orthodox Christians in the Republic of Georgia — not wishing any longer to remain members of the renovationist "official" Georgian Orthodox Church which had collaborated so closely with the Soviet regime—sought to join our jurisdiction. They were officially received by us in the

Continued on page 2

CONTENTS

Church Persecuted in Georgia.	1
Divine Fire and Man-made Steam. . . .	1
John the Blessed	5
Theophany at Jamaica Pond.	11
"A Special Place"	12
The Real Truth.	14
Christian Attitude Toward Passions . .	15

The Divine Fire and Man-made Steam

In the early sixties, Bishop Danilo Krstitch was a young priest-monk from Novi Sad, Serbia, studying for his doctorate at Harvard's School of Theology. The fathers of Holy Transfiguration

Monastery, which was then located in Jamaica Plain, MA, offered him living quarters during his time of study at Harvard. From this a deep and lasting friendship developed between them, which continued through the decades,

even after Fr. Danilo returned to Serbia and became a bishop in the increasingly ecumenistic Serbian patriarchate. The monks never hesitated to express to Vladika their dismay over his involvement in these un-Orthodox activities. Nonetheless, the contacts continued, always friendly, with Vladika inviting the monks on many occasions to visit him in Serbia.

About eight years ago, Bishop Danilo visited Holy Transfiguration Monastery at its new location in Brookline. It was a warm reunion, whose joy, however, was tempered by the realization that

Vladika could not be received with the honors and protocol due to a bishop, since he belonged to the Ecumenistic Serbian Patriarchate. Metropolitan Ephraim, Archimandrite Panteleimon and Vladika

spoke for a long time about contemporary church issues, and Vladika spoke with regret about the many compromises of the Orthodox Faith that he was witnessing in the self-designated "official Churches" of World Orthodoxy. At the end of the talk, Metropolitan Ephraim remarked, "Well, Vladika, if you want to extract yourself from this mess, come to the United States and stay with us, and I will have you put in

charge of our parishes in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Florida!" Vladika smiled, bowed his head, and said nothing.

Later, Metropolitan Ephraim spoke to Metropolitan Makarios about this meeting. "When we knew Bishop Danilo in the sixties," remarked Metropolitan Ephraim, "he was a zealous and articulate defender of the Orthodox Faith. What I saw before me this time was a broken man. Since he understood the betrayal that was going on, why didn't he break with the Patriarchate?" To which Metropolitan Makarios replied, "Don't you understand, Despota? Bishop



Frs. Arsenios, Danilo and Panteleimon in 1962

Continued on page 7

autumn of 1997. Until such time as a suitable candidate is found to be ordained bishop for the flock in Georgia, they remain directly under the administration of our Holy Synod. Thus, the parishes in Georgia are not simply affiliated with us, but form an organic part of our Church. (See their web-site: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/1865>).

The wish of our parishioners in Georgia is simply to practice their Orthodox Faith in freedom and according to their conscience and convictions. They have no political agenda whatsoever.

The situation in Georgia is analogous to that in Russia. The “official State Church” of the Georgian Patriarchate is seeking to obtain a favored status and special privileges from the secular government. Since in both these cases those in power in the Church and in the civil administration are friends and collaborators from the Soviet era, one could say that the official Patriarchates have already attained their goal. Already the Georgian Patriarchate and the Georgian government have signed a special Concordat, the terms of which have already inspired loud protests from human rights groups both within Georgia and abroad.

Ever since our people left the State Church of Georgia in 1997, they have been vilified in the press, threatened, and even openly persecuted by the forces of the official Church — with the cooperation of the civil authorities. This has been well documented; the pertinent papers are in our files. Our clergy and parishioners in Georgia have been declared to be traitors to the homeland, schismatics, heretics, CIA agents, etc.

Two earlier cases have been

especially prominent.

1) Fr. Andrew Boroda, former head of our mission in Georgia, was harassed, illegally detained by the

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police, beaten, and sent death threats. Eventually Fr. Andrew was even forced to emigrate for his own safety and that of his family. He now serves as the priest of our parish in St. Paul, Minnesota. The facts of Fr. Boroda’s immigration case shed much light on the present state of affairs in the Republic of Georgia and on the position our church there is found in.

2) In western Georgia, in the large city of Kutaisi, our parish has been refused permission to build a church now for several years. They have been told repeatedly by the municipal authorities that first they must secure written permission from the local bishop of the State Church before they will issue them the necessary permits, etc. Of course, the local Patriarchate bishop has no intention of ever granting such permission.

And now a new round of persecution has just now broken out:

On September 24, 2002, we received the following letter written by our clergy in Georgia to Metro-

politan Ephraim of Boston:

Information for His Eminence:
Pogrom in Georgia!

Your Eminence,

As you know, our parish in Georgia is building, with your blessing and financial help, a small church on our own plot of land.

The local bishop of the Georgian Patriarchate and its priests do not want to allow this construction. Therefore, they have contacted the local governor and he, on his part, has assigned others to study corresponding structures and clarify the legality of this building project. This commission, of course, has revealed that the construction has no license, the project is not confirmed by the corresponding authorities. In general, one has to say that in Georgia, except for the large cities, this law in fact does not have any effect, that one has to confirm the project through a government agency and get a license for construction. Everyone does as they wish and what they wish, and thus they build. Even in Tbilisi there are many such buildings. And in small populated areas like Shemokmedi in Guria all the houses are built without permission granted from higher authorities for the projects. Almost 100 percent of the houses!

So, this is just an excuse to somehow interfere with the construction. But our people continue to build, nonetheless.

Today, September 24, 2002, in the local school at Shemokmedi there was a meeting organized in this village on this topic. We decided that it would not pay for us to send a delegation from Tbilisi and had Fr. David go there from Kutaisi in order to see and take part in this meeting. And also, so that on our part that

there would be no clashes with the parishioners and the clergy of the Patriarchate. At noon they called us from Guria and said that a delegation had specially come from Tbilisi from the Patriarchate, and also the local bishop of the Patriarchate took part. They squeezed our people out of the auditorium and the delegation from the Patriarchate began reviling us and our Church and said many dirty slanders against us. In a couple of words, they would not allow our delegation to utter a word so that they could stand up and explain to the local people of Shemokmedi what was going on, etc. Finally, our people loudly demanded to be given an opportunity to speak, and after this demand, our parishioner David from Guria began speaking, but was not able to finish since by the instigation of one priest of the Patriarchate, our people were driven out into the court of the school where some drunken people were waiting (so-called parishioners of the Patriarchate), who began throwing stones and bottles at them, and also broke the windows of the car which Fr. David and those from Kutaisi had come in. Also, they wanted to beat our parishioners and dashed at them. Our Luka suffered a little as well as a few others.

After all that happened our parishioners gathered at one place and then dispersed. Our people in Guria, after that transpired, have decided not to stop, and to finish the construction of the Church! We shall see what will be in the future.

That is all for the present.

With love in Christ,
Fr. Gelasius and Father Zurab
[Aroshvili]

The following day, Sept. 25, the clergy reported that the violence

against our parishioners was continuing. At school their children were declared to be “sectarians” and then beaten. The villagers in Shemokmedi began to vandalize the construction site of our small church there. Our clergy fear that this wave of violence will spread to the city of Kutaisi—where we also have a parish—and eventually to the capital, Tbilisi. Our clergy have sought to impress upon the faithful that they are not to answer violence with violence on any account.

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In response to these persecutions, Metropolitan Ephraim wrote the following letter:

The Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston
1476 Centre Street
Roslindale, MA 02131-1417

The Honorable Richard Miles
U. S. Ambassador to Georgia
Tbilisi, Georgia

September 27, 2002

Dear Sir:

From the Georgian town of Shemokmedi, in Guria near the Black Sea, there have come to me reports from first-hand eyewitnesses of incidents of violence, destruction of private property, and verbal and physical abuse directed against innocent people, including children, who have broken no law. Specifically, these are Orthodox Christians who

have separated themselves from the Patriarchate of Georgia because they do not consent to the Patriarchate’s ecclesiastical policies. In other words, this is strictly a matter of their religious convictions. It has been reported to me that the above-mentioned acts of violence have been provoked and encouraged by clergy of the Georgian Patriarchate.

These faithful are affiliated with us and they are, in fact, a mission of our Church. Furthermore, they are supported in their church work by funds sent from our Orthodox Christian institutions and parishes in the United States.

I ask you to investigate this open violations of the rights of these innocent people. For more specific details about these incidents, I urge you to contact Otari Babunashvili (wotar@hotmail.com), a resident of Tbilisi who is fluent in English.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

+ Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

The Georgian clergy also wrote their own letter to the American Ambassador. Here is the letter in part:

H.E. Ambassador Richard Miles
The United States Embassy
Tbilisi

September 27th 2002

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

We saw it appropriate and necessary to bring to your attention the following alarming fact that took place in village Shemokmedi of Guria region. On September 24th 2002, with the encouragement of local Bishop Joseph of the official (Patriarchate) jurisdiction and of the Patriarchate’s representative in the

Georgian Parliament, Mr. Giorgi Andriadze, a mob armed with sticks and bottles attacked our parishioners injuring them and damaging their property. On September 25th 2002, with the encouragement of a local school teacher, an eight-year-old boy (!), a son of our parishioner, was beaten by his school mates. Finally, it came to our knowledge that the same people are planning to attack our faithful and demolish our Church, which we recently started to build with our own funds on our private piece of land.

We pray that out of your kindness you will look seriously into this issue and will do your utmost to influence the authorities in preventing this planned attack against our Church in village Shemokmedi or any future attacks against our other Churches in Tbilisi and Kutaisi.

It is also our intention to inform the public about these disgraceful and barbarous deeds perpetrated by the official representatives of the Georgian Patriarchate. To this aim, on Saturday September 28th at 11:30 a.m. we will be holding a press-conference in the office of an NGO [Non Government Organization].

Thank you very much in advance.

Sincerely,

+ Presbyter Gelasius Aroshvili
+ Presbyter Zurab Aroshvili

On September 28, the planned press conference was held; although, for the most part, the state-run media took the side of the official Georgian Orthodox Patriarchate.

On September 29–30, the villagers once again vandalized the church construction site.

On October 1–2, Fr. Gelasius Aroshvili and a delegation of twelve parishioners from Tbilisi travelled to the village of Shemokmedi to gather information firsthand.

Throughout the village, placards were hung summoning all the villagers to assemble at 10 a.m. on Sunday [!], October 6, in order to protect their village from the “Boston schismatics” and to demolish our church and thus destroy this “nest of Satan.”

The local authorities and police told our people (who are in the minority) that they do not intend to interfere in the “internal affairs of the village”!

On October 6, 2002, in the village of Shemokmedi, a mob, stirred up by clergymen from the official Georgian Patriarchate, carried out their threat and demolished our nearly-completed church to its foundations. Our parishioners observed the scene from afar; others stayed in their homes to avoid being beaten again by the mob; yet others have scattered and hid elsewhere in the region for safety’s sake, not wishing to remain in their own native village.

Keston News has also reported these events.



Scenes of the same area after demolition



Rear view of nearly completed church before demolition

John The Blessed

Translation of a St. Basil's Day Story by Photios Kontoglou

Once Christmas had passed, Saint Basil the Great took his staff into his hand and went round about to all the villages to see who would celebrate his feast day with a pure heart. He passed through many diverse hamlets and towns, but no matter whose door he knocked on, they would not open to him because they took him to be a vagabond. He left each town embittered because, though he himself was in no need from men, he understood how much anguish would fill some poor man's heart because of the pitilessness which these selfish men displayed. One day, he was just leaving one such heartless village and as he was passing by the cemetery, he saw that the memorials over the graves were ramshackle, the crosses were broken or had tumbled down, and jackals had burrowed into the newly-dug graves. Being a saint, he could hear the dead speaking and saying: "While we were in the world above, we toiled, we went through many tribulations and left behind children and grandchildren so that they would light a candle and burn some incense on our behalf. But we don't see anything! Neither a priest standing at our head reading a memorial service nor kolyva. It is as though we left no one behind." Saint Basil again became grieved and said, "These villagers don't give anything to anyone, neither to the living, nor to the dead." He made his way out of the cemetery and walked all alone in the frozen snow.

On the eve of his feast, he came to some villages that were the poorest of the poor in Greece. The icy wind moaned as it whipped between the brush and the rocks. There was not a living soul in sight. The night

was pitch black. Behind him he espied a small hillock and at the foot of it there was tucked away a cabin next to a sheepfold. Saint Basil went into the enclosure and knocked on the cabin door with his staff and shouted, "Have mercy on a poor man for the sake of the souls of your dead ones and may Christ provide for your needs in this world!" The dogs awoke and jumped towards him, but no sooner had they come close and smelled him when they began wagging their tails and rolling at his feet, whining imploringly and joyfully. At that very instant, the door opened and out stepped a shepherd, a bearded young man some twenty-five years old. It was John Barbakos, a simple-hearted, rough-hewn man of the earth. Before he had even taken a good look to see who had knocked at the door, he said, "Come in, come in! Good morning!"

"May you be
blessed, you and
your household and
your sheep.
May the peace of
God be upon you."

Inside the cabin, a lamp shone where it hung near a cradle which was suspended from two beams. Next to the hearth there was some bedding and John's wife was sleeping there. When Saint Basil stepped in, John took his hand and kissed it and said, "Give me your blessing, Elder." He said this as though he had known him for years, as though

he were speaking to his father. The Saint said, "May you be blessed, you and your household and your sheep. May the peace of God be upon you." The young woman arose and she too came and bowed and kissed his hand and he blessed her. Saint Basil looked like some poor monk who was a beggar with a wretched old skoufa on his head; his raso had holes and was patched, his sandals too were worn through, and he carried an old bag slung over his shoulders.

John the blessed put some wood on the fire. Straightway, the hut became radiant and seemed to be a palace. The beams looked as though they were dusted with gold and the rennet bags which were suspended appeared like vigil lamps and the wooden tubs and the cheese-molds and the other implements that John used in making cheese shone like silver. So it was with all the other lowly and humble things that John the blessed had in his cabin; they all became resplendent as though they were magnificently adorned with diamonds. The logs that burned in the hearth sizzled and sang like the songbirds of Paradise and they emitted a certain sweet fragrance.

They took Saint Basil and sat him down by the fire and John's wife brought him some pillows to rest on. The elder took his pack from around his neck and set it down next to himself and he also took off his old raso and rested there in his cassock. John the blessed, together with his helper, went out to milk the flock and he put the newborn lambs into the pen. Afterwards he separated the ewes who were about to give birth and kept them in the fold while his helper put out feed

for the rest. His flock was small. John was poor, but he was blessed. He had great joy always, both day and night, because he was a good man and his wife was a good woman. Every man who passed by the cabin would be cared for as though he were a brother. This too is why Saint Basil came to their dwelling and rested there as though it were his own home; and it was blessed right down to its very foundations. That night, all the cities and townships of the inhabited world, all the rulers, bishops, and notable men awaited him, but he went to none of them. Instead, he came and rested in the humble cabin of John the blessed.

However, to continue. Once they had put feed out for the flock, John came in and said to the Saint, "Elder, what a great joy I have! I want you to read us that service to Saint Basil! I am an unlearned fellow, but I still love the services of our Faith! I have a service book here given to me by an abbot from the Holy Mountain. Whenever anybody with book-learning comes through, I sit him down and have him read to us from this service book here because we don't have any church nearby."

It had just begun to dawn faintly in the east. Saint Basil arose and turned toward that direction and made the sign of the cross. Then he bent over and took from his knapsack a service book for priests; he began and said: "Blessed is our God, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages." John the blessed went and stood behind him. His wife nursed the baby, then she also went and stood next to him with her hands crossed respectfully. Saint Basil chanted "God is the Lord" and the dismissal hymn of the feast of

the Circumcision of our Saviour, "Our human form hast Thou taken on Thyself without change," omitting, however, to chant his own dismissal hymn which says, "Thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth." His voice was sweet and humble and John and his wife felt great compunction even though they did not fully understand the words.

Saint Basil recited all of Matins



St. Basil the Great (ca. 329-379)

and the canon of the feast, "Come, O ye people, let us sing a song unto Christ God," omitting, however, to chant his own canon which says, "It were meet that thy words, O Basil, should be present to aid them that strive to praise thee." Afterwards, he recited the whole Liturgy and read the dismissal and blessed them.

Once they had seated themselves at the table and had eaten and had finished, the young woman brought out "Saint Basil's Bread" and put it on the low table. Saint Basil took a knife and blessed the bread with the sign of the cross and said, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He cut the first slice and said, "Christ's portion," then he cut the second slice and said, "The

Mother of God's portion," and then he said, "The master of the house, John the blessed's portion." John said to him, "Elder! you forgot Saint Basil!" The Saint said to him, "Ah yes, you're right!" And then he said, "A portion for Basil, the servant of God." Then, again he said, "The master of the house's portion, the mistress of the house's portion, baby's portion, the helper's portion, the sheep's portion, the paupers portion." Then John the blessed said to the Saint, "Holy Elder, why didn't you cut a portion for yourself?" The Saint said to him. "But I did cut one, my blessed man!" But John, that blessed one, did not understand.

After this, Saint Basil arose and recited this prayer: "O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy nor sufficient that Thou shouldst come under the roof of the house of my soul...." Then John the blessed said, "Elder, since you know many things and can read, can you tell me, to which palatial homes perchance could Saint Basil have gone this night? The rulers and the kings, what sins can they have? We the poor are the ones who are sinners because our poverty causes us to do evil."

Saint Basil wept and then he repeated the prayer over again, but this time differently: "O Lord my God, I know that Thy servant John the simple is worthy and sufficient that Thou mightest come under the roof of his house. For he is a babe and Thy mysteries are revealed unto babes."

And again, John that happy man, John the blessed, did not understand.

Danilo is a patriot. He feels he has an obligation to remain with his Patriarchate because he believes he can help his country in this way."

This, indeed, was the problem. Like the Byzantines who thought they could save Constantinople from the Turks by submitting to the Roman Pope in the 15th century, many Orthodox today are seduced by a misconceived patriotism and love for an earthly country to compromise their allegiance to the Heavenly Fatherland.

Below, we reprint excerpts from a fine article, "The Divine Fire And Man-made Steam," that Bishop Danilo wrote when he was still a priest-monk in Boston. At the end, we have also attached a note in his own handwriting, to the fathers of Holy Transfiguration Monastery written a short time before his repose on April 20, 2002. The sentiments expressed in this note, coming from a bishop who was a member of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Serbia, are of considerable interest to us today.

Visible Apostolic Church

We have nowadays only two serious ecclesiastical bodies that claim to be the channels of divine love and infallibility: the Orthodox Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Communion. Orthodox Christians have been suffering for more than nine centuries by witnessing to the pitiful delusion of an Italian bishop who wants to be a ruler, if possible, over all earthly rulers, or at least, over all bishops.

This Roman innovation, the crudest assertion of self-love, tries to overthrow the initial Catholic Tradition in which all the Apostles

and bishops are essentially equal, because they are all equally appointed by our God Jesus Christ as the ambassadors of His Eternal Kingdom.

Many among the Orthodox are likely to be hypnotized by the display of Latin pomp and the persistent uniate double-talk of our "closeness" and "oneness." Everyone knows about dogmatic differences between Orthodox and Protestants, but few are they who can specify the heresies of Rome.

Man Is Unifying Center

For Roman ecclesiology, the criterion of unity is not the God-man Jesus (although he is proclaimed by lip service to be equally and simultaneously present in all the dioceses), but the unifying center is a man, the bishop of Rome. Thus a patriarchal administrative office is valued above the sacra-

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mental presence of the divine Shepherd.

After the Papal primacy the most important tenet in the Roman ecclesiology is the so-called "apostolic succession" through which the "separated brethren" may enjoy the full sacramental communion with the Incarnate God and still, illogically, be considered outside of

the "Catholic" church because they disobey the Pope. Again, a bishop on earth is claiming to be more important than the Resurrected Christ Who said: "Lo, I am with you every day."

The Orthodox Church holds on to the patristic ecclesiology whereby the Church (understood always as a concrete local community, starting with that of Jerusalem) is the Body of Christ because of the communion of the Divine Liturgy. And the bishops, as the successors and concelebrants of the Apostles had to obey Him instantly and constantly as they did after Pentecost. The believers would obey their bishops as long as they are Christ-bearers and Christ-distributors. Their power depends totally on Christ in the Chalice.

The Protestant Outlook

The Protestant outlook on the Church stands and falls with their peculiar theory on the Eucharist. Even the classical Lutheran teaching on the real presence, in fact, evacuates the mystery of the Communion service by denying that *this* piece of bread and *this* cup of wine on the altar *change* by the power of the Holy Spirit Who overshadows them into the very Body and Blood of Christ.

Such a "spiritual" and symbolic understanding of the "real presence" inescapably leads to an emphasis on the loose, rather human, institutions dimly mirroring the invisible Church of the "predestined."

The Protestant "bodiless" and "priestless" ecclesiology, lacking the apostolic doctrine on the continuity of Christ's physical presence in His Church on earth, was never appealing to the Orthodox.

There is a tacit consensus among the Orthodox theologians concerning the praiseworthy motive behind the contemporary longing of the Protestants to come closer to the age-long Apostolic Church by way of the ecumenical movement. And this, because they feel that something of paramount importance is missing in their sanctuaries, namely the Body of the Ascended Lord Who can be, bodily, at once in heaven and on earth.

On the whole, Protestants are capable of listening to the infallible *monologue* of Orthodoxy because they do not claim any more to be the infallible “pillar and foundation of truth.” Our only rival in this dogmatic tournament is the Papacy.

Orthodox theologians give two answers, which are actually two competing ecclesiologies, on the visible boundaries of the Visible Church.

First Camp — Three Shades

The first camp elaborates its doctrine on the formalistic approach to the bodily presence of Christ, namely, that all splinters from the First-Thousand-Years Mother Church of the East have the same Body and Blood of Christ in their mass, if they have clung to the “apostolic succession.” The “*deus ex machina*” of “apostolic succession” is used to cover and relativize all the heretical teachings of these “catholic” splinters.

Among the theologians of this first camp, we find some differences in shades. Similar to the three types of mentality in the Anglican Communion, they could be called “high” ecumenists, “broad” ecumenists and “low” ecumenists. The “high” ones will plead for the real presence, outside of the Orthodox

Church, only in the Roman Communion. The “broad” ones will extend the sacramental reality to all the episcopal splinter-bodies. And the “low” ecclesiologists are willing to dilute the eucharistic presence (and therefore, the limits of the *Una Sancta* in history) into a subjective “manducatio” of Christ’s Body according to anyone’s capacity to believe.

All three shades have in common the basic assumption that the reality of the sacraments is not rooted in the purity of the apostolic faith. On the contrary, a formal inertia of a vague “apostolic succession,” without any real and unanimous assent in the unchangeable faith, is offered as the last criterion for the visibility of the Church.

According to their respective sensitivities for the importance of the dogmas, these three types will draw three practical conclusions as

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Apostles.”**

far as “intercommunion” is concerned. The “high” ecumenists, up to now, would disapprove of any “intercommunion,” but merely for disciplinary reasons. They have the strong scruples of professors of dogmatics.

The “broad” ecumenists want to be logical and to conform with their basic principle; therefore, they advocate immediate “intercommunion.” Still, up to now, they await for the eventual endorsement of the

hierarchy.

The “low” ecumenists in the Orthodox Church are impatient to apply their belief. In spite of the recent explicit prohibition imposed by the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops (SCOBA), these “love-love-preachers” in their cheap sentimentalism (which is only a human love not yet transfigured by the uncreated divine Love-Truth) have secretly given holy communion to some heterodox. If the “high” ones start to criticize them, they can always answer: “We are not interested in theories and abstract dogmas of no practical value.” “Once you concede that, for example, the Papal church has the same Christ in its mass, you have to say that we are one through the communion. After all, is not Christ Himself the embodiment of all your dogmas? Should we not obey rather Christ in Person rather than some human council of bishops? Let us proceed to full intercommunion with Rome, especially since the Vatican is making such kind overtures.”

Second Camp — Traditionalists

The second camp is made of strict traditionalists who will claim that the Church is coextensive with the Eucharist. Hence, the boundaries of the Visible Church are the very boundaries of the Holy Communion with no Eucharist existing outside the Orthodox Catholic Church.

Among these traditionalists we find two different practices. One, more rigorous, coming down from St. Cyprian of Carthage (Third Century), according to which there is no sacrament whatsoever outside Orthodoxy. Therefore, they would baptize converts from Roman Catholicism and all other heterodox

Christians as simple “catechumens.” This practice was spread among the Greeks. It is still normative on Mount Athos, the champion of Holy Tradition.

The other group of strict ecclesiologists (found among the Slavs and Roumanians) would not baptize the heterodox, but would receive them through chrismation (“confirmation”). They would justify their practice by saying that the “laic” baptisms in all priestless bodies, Rome included (St. Mark of Ephesus sternly declared at the pitiful Council of Florence that the Latin Clergy is no more clergy at all, since the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus explicitly provided a canon by which all bishops and priests who would dare to change anything in the sacred Nicene Creed are to be deposed), is made operative and meaningful only through the chrismation by the unique priesthood of the Orthodox Church.

(The condescending practice whereby the uniates of Russia and Roumania were received simply through a public rejection of papal heresies is the case of an extreme “economy,” perhaps inspired by some Latinized theologians or expedient politicians).

Seal of Holy Spirit

Through chrismation, the second group will say the Orthodox episcopate gives the apostolic “seal of the Holy Spirit” and thus enables a believer to enter into the Holy of holies of the New Testament: the Resurrected Body of Christ Jesus.

The most prominent theologians of this group are the late Patriarch of Moscow, Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky). They would insist, by adducing proofs from canonical

practices since St. Basil the Great and onward, that the self-knowledge of Orthodox Catholicity never permitted any possibility of two or several Eucharistic Communion, dogmatically opposed to each other. This would introduce an absurd contradiction of two or several Christ’s Bodies.

Let us protect the Holy Chalice, this Ark of the New Covenant in order that we and that our assailants may be saved

If the old principle that the rule of faith is embodied in the liturgical Tradition, (*lex orandi est lex credendi*), is exact, then the perennial exclusion of heretics from the Orthodox Eucharist, as well as the impossibility of an Orthodox going to communion outside of the Orthodox Church, signifies implicitly the non-existence of the Body of Christ outside of the Orthodox Church. And this is not merely an *argumentum ex silentio*, but a constant behavior of the Church, revealing her nature.

Nonetheless, this clear vision of the Church is not without a terrible cloud above—the Orthodox themselves. If they can taste even now in time, some ineffable reality in the Everlasting Lord bodily present here and now, they might be in the situation of Judas, communicating unworthily, carelessly. Such an “Orthodox” communicant resembles a cold tomb which Christ leaves immediately.

The mystery of salvation

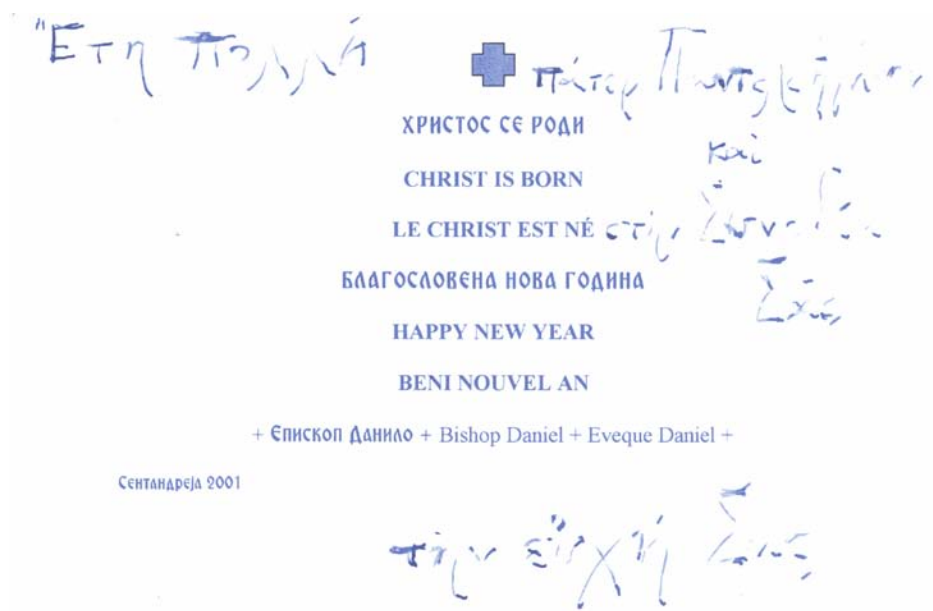
remains always the mystery of each person facing God. But the strict Orthodox theologians are intractable when claiming there is no salvation outside the Orthodox Catholic Church in her eschatological fullness: all the elect are to be gathered in the Heavenly Jerusalem which is the only “pan-Orthodox center”, infallible and lovable forever.

We are again in troublesome times when Patriarchs resemble politicians more than they do Apostles; when the official theologians keep silent or cry “amen” to every nonsense. Again the monasteries and lay-brotherhoods are the last strongholds of the Heavenly Church on earth. We have to stamp out the merchants in the Temple because they are bartering the last and only Pearl of the Church—Christ’s Body. Let us protect the Holy Chalice, this Ark of the New Covenant in order that we may be saved and that our assailants may be saved if they repent before the Lord of the Church, actively present in the Chalice of Orthodoxy.

It is no more a question of saving the outward uniformity of the Church’s calendar (this bond of love is already broken) but the very ground of the *unity of the Faith* is about to be disrupted—God forbid. The last apocalyptic stroke against the Little Flock of the New Testament is called the MERGER OF SYNCRETISM or, more correctly, the EUCHARISTIC RELATIVISM.

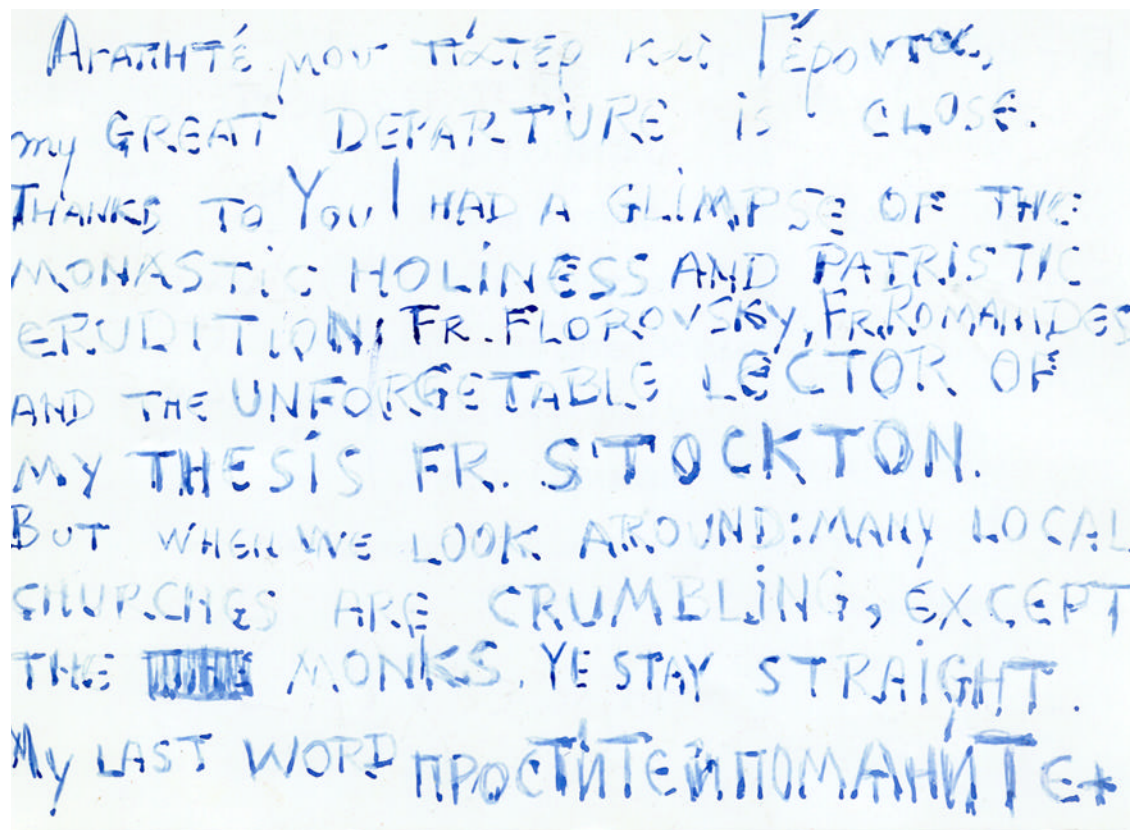
St. Paul, who ordered so earnestly to keep the Tradition, exhorts our generation also with his victorious zeal: “complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Phil 2:2).

The card Bishop Danilo sent to Holy Transfiguration
Monastery shortly before his repose



[In Greek]: Many years,
Father Panteleimon, and to
your Synodia.

[In Greek]:
Your blessing.



[In Greek]: My beloved
Father and Elder:
My great departure is close.
Thanks to you I had a
glimpse of the monastic
holiness and patristic erudi-
tion: Fr. Florovsky, Fr.
Romanides and the unfor-
gettable lector of my thesis
Fr. Stockton.
But when we look around:
many local churches are
crumbling, except the
monks. Ye stay straight.
My last word.
[In Slavonic]: Forgive me
and remember me.

Theophany at Jamaica Pond



Fr. John Fleser and hardy parishioner George Kordan brave the frigid waters.



Presbytera Victoria Fleser gets blessed by Father John. The frozen waters Jamaica Pond testify that this is not the balmy Mediterranean!



On January 6/19, 2002, the Feast of Holy Epiphany (the Baptism of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ by St. John the Baptist), Father John Fleser, Deacon Elias Fagan, along with the parishioners of St. Anna's Orthodox Church, went to the Jamaica Pond in the Boston neighborhood of Jamaica Plain, MA immediately after the Divine Liturgy to perform the Great Blessing of Waters. Jamaica Pond is about a five minute drive from the Church. This was the first time the parish had gone to bless a body of water on Holy Epiphany; but it was such a blessing for all that they will now be doing it every year. The weather was cold and there was ice on the pond, but all were warmed by the grace of God which blessed them.

True New Englanders, the parishioners of St. Anna's line the wintry shores of Jamaica Pond. Deacon Elias Fagan, Fr. John Fleser and server Daniel Lane of Maine form the front row.

A loudspeaker announces a wake-up call and the residents are aroused and shuffled in an orderly fashion into a gymnasium for morning calisthenics. The daily routine is then followed by a communal meal, preceded by “quiet time” before food is served. After meals, the living quarters are inspected, as the daily program is unfurled, one that involves a mixture of physical activity, constructive time, motivational talks and time for introspection. Residents are brought here from their homes, to an isolated environment where staff members coordinate the program with walkie-talkie communication and activities are carefully supervised. What is this strange place? A rehabilitation facility?

No! It is the special and happy place of St. Xenia Camp 2002, nestled in a picturesque campsite near the White Mountains along the beautiful Saco River in Fryeburg, ME. The “residents” are campers, aged 8-16, brought in from parish communities near and far. Morning calisthenics help to ease the muscle soreness from the previous day’s enjoyable activities, and “get the juices flowing” for the morning activities to follow shortly thereafter. The pre-meal “quiet time” is that of morning prayer, a time for all to beseech our Lord for His mercy and guidance, reflect on the Gospel reading and lives of the saints of the day, as well as serving as a means of bonding together the Orthodox Christian camp community. The daily cabin “inspections” are conducted by the Camp Chaplain and represent a lively part of the program, motivating the

campers to care for their temporary dwelling and encourage imagination in decorating their cabins. The daily program generally includes “physical activity” in the form of fun-filled games, hikes through beautiful areas of the nearby White Mountains, refreshing swimming in the pool, canoeing down the Saco River, and much more. “Constructive time” is offered in the form of a wonderful arts and crafts program (giving campers an opportunity to create valuable and beautiful “mementos” of their camp experience), as well as time for fellowship amongst friends, old and new. “Motivational talks” are conducted in the form of small group informal catechetical discussions, designed to stir the hearts and minds of our Orthodox youth to think about our faith in the context

Please reserve
August 17-23, 2003
for
St. Xenia Camp
Info: phone (207)
967-5830
email:
mihailoff@
adelphia.net

of daily living and ongoing challenges. The busy daily program, full of fun-filled events and activities, is balanced with opportunities for introspection and worship, through the daily cycle of services and inspiring talks (and supported by the “mentor” role of the counselors).

St. Xenia Camp 2002 had a banner year this year! The camp attracted a record number of registrants, 70 campers coming from near and far. The camp was also blessed this year with a wonderful contingent of industrious and committed volunteers, as well as an extraordinary group of motivated and energetic counselors. All volunteers and staff members were driven by a spirit of love and sacrifice, fostering an atmosphere that was wholesome, enjoyable and special. Indeed, as one tearful exiting camper put it so well, St. Xenia Camp is a “special place.”

Each year, we are committed to making the camp experience even better. The camp program for 2002 included some exciting changes, allowing for a manageable pace for the daily program, taking advantage of clear successes from previous years, and even included opportunities for individual camper choices in evening activities. Constructive feedback from campers and staff has yielded many ideas that have helped to facilitate the growth of the camp program and enrich the camp experience.

We are grateful for the guidance and support of His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim, the visiting and contributing clergy, and the hard-working administrative staff and volunteers, who make St. Xenia Camp possible. May the intercession of St. Xenia continue to guide our efforts to make the camp experience the best it can be, and may St. Xenia Camp be seen as a “special place” for our Orthodox youth to come home to. Please reserve August 17-23 for St. Xenia Camp 2003.

Place”
Vassily Mihailoff



A group shot in front of the dining hall



Fr. John Routs serving Liturgy



Fr. Barsanuphius is surrounded by happy campers

THE REAL TRUTH

Proclaiming the Resurrection
in the 21st-Century Marketplace
(*Christian News*, February 4,
2002)

“Dad, the kids in my AP English class are so careful to make comments that won’t hurt the feelings of others in the class. It almost seems that they are afraid to step on someone’s toes.” Then my son mused, “No one seems to be wearing any shoes.”

The World’s View of Truth

Shortly after hearing these words from my high school senior, I read an article by Josh McDowell who described a conversation he had with his son Sean, also a senior in high school. He asked, “Son, in your twelve years of public school, were you ever taught that anything is absolutely true?”

His son surprised him by saying, “Sure.”

He then asked what absolute truth he had learned. Sean responded, “Tolerance.”

Tolerance used to mean that you respected another person’s right to a different view. Now it means that you dare not insist that your truth is superior or better. This new meaning for the word tolerance requires that we believe that there is no one source of absolute truth.

As we step into the twenty-first century, we need to realize that the times have changed. If we view the landscape around us, we will come to the conclusion that Dorothy did in the Wizard of Oz, “We’re not in Kansas anymore.”

One of the first lectures my son attended in a secular college began with the professor saying, “There are no right answers in this class.” The question facing us today is: “How do we reach a generation that communicates with its eyes and thinks with its feelings?”

Tolerance of all truths, even conflicting views, may feel good for the moment, but it does not provide a lasting solution for nagging uncertainty.

We puzzle at the findings of pollsters who say that sixty-one percent of people who claim to be Christians also say there is no absolute truth. In the marketplace of the twenty-first century, Sheila fits in well when she says, “I believe in God. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. But my faith has carried me a long way. It’s Sheilaism. Just my own little voice.”

Saint Paul Proclaims the Truth

How do we reach people who believe in truths but disdain Truth? Consider stepping back to the first century and following the footsteps of the Apostle Paul as he walks through the marketplace in Athens. The plethora of statues to different gods and the openness to different ideas and different truths led him to see how religious the people were. Distress gripped him when he saw the city was full of idols (Acts 17:16). Saint Paul yearned to have these people come to the Truth.

“Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:22, 23).

What if Saint Paul were to join

us in walking through the marketplace of the twenty-first century? Can’t you hear him tell the current generation, “I can see that in every way you are very religious”? A popular marketing analyst, Faith Popcorn writes, “We’re at the start of a Great Awakening. A time of spiritual upheaval and religious revival.... What’s different about this awakening is that there’s very little agreement on who or what God is, what constitutes worship, and what this ritualistic outpouring means for the future direction of our civilization.” Spirituality sells in a materialistic world.

Saint Paul was distressed, yet he was confident that he had the Truth to reach people adrift in a sea of different truths. He proclaimed the true God. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands” (Acts 17:24).

The Saint continued, “But now he commands all people everywhere to repent.” He warned about the judgment to come. “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the Man he has appointed.” He spoke to a generation that said, “What is truth?” by anchoring his statements in the supreme truth of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. “He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30, 31).

The Touchstone of All Truth

This is how we reach a generation marooned on an island where all truth is relative. Proclaim Truth by proclaiming that our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

What happens when the Truth collides with truths that are bounc-

ing around like agitated electrons? An explosion takes place. Some sneer and walk away. Others say, "We'll hear you again on this subject" (Acts 17:32). Some in our generation will shrug their shoulders, or slouch down in their seats and say, "Whatever," "Who cares?" or "That's your truth." Others will see the risen Christ as Saint Paul did on the road to Damascus. The resurrection of Christ is the touchstone of all truth.

Tolerance of all truths, even conflicting views, may feel good for the moment, but it does not provide a lasting solution for nagging uncertainty. When your lips are chapped and dry, you can find immediate relief by licking them. Then what happens? For a moment they feel better, but then it gets worse. The appropriate cure is not more licking. It is lip balm.

We must proclaim Christ our Saviour and His resurrection as the cure for uncertainty. This holds true for every generation and every group of people as Saint Paul testified, "He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Proof to all people? Yes, even people of the twenty-first century marketplace are afraid to step on someone's toes.

Remember:

No one else rose from the dead.

Neither Buddha,

Nor Confucius,

Nor Mohammed,

Nor Bringham Young or Joseph Smith,

Nor Mary Baker Eddy,

Nor any founder of any other religion.

Only Christ rose from the dead.

+ + + + +

The Christian's Attitude Towards His Passions

by

Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov:

Ascetical Essays, Vol. 1

A certain great ascetic used to say: "We ought to bear patiently with our own shortcomings in exactly the same manner as we patiently endure the shortcomings of others, and condescend to our soul in its infirmities and imperfections. At the same time, we should not give ourselves over to negligence; rather, we ought to take diligent concern for our correction and attainment to perfection" (*The Spiritual Instructions of the Blessed Elder Seraphim of Sarov*, Ch. 10).

"Do not be agitated or puzzled," a certain holy Father has said, "when you see in yourself the working of any passion whatsoever. When a passion arises, struggle against it; strive to bridle it and to root it out by means of humility and prayer" (St. Abba Dorotheus, Instr. 13, *On the Patient Endurance of Temptations*).

"Consternation and confusion when the working of a passion reveals itself serve as an indication that a man has not yet come to know himself" (*Ibid*).

In the light of God's Word let us carefully review our attitude towards our passions and infirmities that we might have a correct understanding of ourselves, and, on the basis of this correct self-understanding, steer ourselves aright.

Man is conceived in iniquities and born in sins (Ps. 50:7): Conse-

quently, the passions or sinful infirmities of soul and body are natural to our fallen nature.

The passions are contranatural to our undefiled nature as it was created. The passions are likewise contranatural to renewed nature. They are natural to fallen nature. In like manner the symptoms of every bodily illness are natural to that illness. Thus, illness and death are natural to our body which has lost immortality and the properties of immortality. Before the fall immortality was natural to our body—illness and death were unnatural.

The passions may be called *sin* in the broad sense of the word. When the Apostle speaks of *sin which dwells in a man* (Rom. 7:14; 7:20), by the word sin he means the infection of the whole of human nature by evil; he means the passions. This condition is also called *carnal* (Rom. 7:14; 8:8) and *death* (Rom. 7:24; 8:2).

Until the redemption of our race by the Saviour, man was unable to oppose the passions even should he desire to do so. They forcefully attracted him to themselves; they held dominion over him against his will. The Christian, by means of holy Baptism, casts off from himself the yoke of the passions. He receives strength and the ability to oppose the passions, to trample them down (St. Abba Dorotheus, Instr. 1, *On Renunciation of the World*). But even the man who has been redeemed, renewed and placed within the spiritual Paradise—the Church—is offered freedom. In accord with his own volition he may either oppose the passions and conquer them with the help of the Lord, or submit and be belabored by them.

Continued in next issue



About Our Logo
A Divine Confirmation

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

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“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Church, is in need of your support.



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